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June 1, 2017

Federal Communications Commission
445 12th St SW,
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Sirs,

I am writing this letter with regards to proceeding 17-108, the so-called "Restoring Internet Freedom" proceeding. Clearly, this proceeding is anything but that. Giving it a misleading name as such, does not make it so.

For starters, I would like to remind the FCC of its sole mission: **to act in the public interest.** In this sentence, "the public" refers to the overall general public, and/or a majority of the citizens of the United States of America, which should not be construed to mean selected "big businesses" (which typically have their own agenda, which is often divergent from the "public interest").

On February 26, 2015, the FCC adopted open internet rules, commonly known as "Net Neutrality" rules, which classified Internet Service Providers (ISP's) under Title II of the Communications Act of 1934. One can certainly and clearly see that since 2/26/15, nothing specified under this regulation has negatively affected consumers' ability to access any website of their own choosing, nor the hindered the quality of their access to websites of their own choosing. It puts into question the underlying need for proceeding 17-108, which claims to be about "restoring internet freedom", when in fact there has been no lack of internet freedom that was caused by the existence of "net neutrality" over the last two years. In fact, the very regulations that ISPs became subject to under the Title II classification, were specifically intended to protect consumers from being harmed by potentially unscrupulous ISPs, who in some cases, specifically sought to "throttle" their customers' connection speed to certain web sites (of the ISPs choosing).

Subscribers of internet service pay a monthly fee for broadband internet access. That fee is usually tied to the overall speed of their internet connection. If a consumer chooses to pay more to their ISP in exchange for a faster overall speed, that is their prerogative, and under the rules noted above, the ISP cannot subsequently "throttle" their connection speed to any websites over any other, even if those websites belong to a competitor. ALL BITS ARE TREATED EQUALLY. The proceeding that the FCC has mis-named "Restoring Internet Freedom" would do quite the opposite, as it legally permits ISPs to "throttle" the connection speed of one website as compared to another, at the ISPs sole discretion and benefit.

For example, if this proceeding (17-108) were to be approved by the FCC, if a customer pays for internet service from Verizon, but wishes to access premium web-based content that is provided by a competitor (for example, Time Warner), Verizon could, at its sole discretion, choose to either block the competing content, or charge that competitor more money in order to enable them to reach their customer (who has already paid for internet access and for the premium content). For larger companies, they would probably just pay the additional fee (passing along this cost to the end user – the subscriber who has already paid their ISP for internet access). In other words, content providers like Netflix, Hulu, HBO-Go and other premium services would be forced to pass on these "back-door" price increases to consumers, who will get the same quality of service they already have today, but would now have to pay even more for it. **This negatively harms the consumers** – the very public that the FCC is supposed to be acting in the best interest of.

Perhaps most importantly, eliminating "Title II" classification from broadband services would stifle content on the (currently free and open) internet marketplace. In other words, without the consumer protection known as net neutrality, an ISP could, at its will, block content from a website that is promoting views that are contrary to the ISPs. Or block new websites that do not have the funds to pay the newly designed premium fees demanded by the ISP, in order to gain access to their pipes, to reach consumers. This **would forever harm the public.** Can you imagine if the next "Google" or "Yahoo" or "YouTube" or "eBay" could not reach consumers (and thereby develop a massive following), simply because they could not afford to "pay off" the prevailing ISP's?

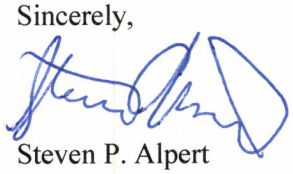
The argument that consumers can always choose a new ISP if they were not happy with the result of "throttling" or "blocking" by their current ISP does not have legs. In most regional markets, consumers only have access to choose one, or at most two broadband internet providers that currently serve their home area. The cost of laying out brand new coaxial wire or fiber by some new "startup" company looking to compete against the currently entrenched providers in each market would be so prohibitive, that it is silly to even consider that as a remote possibility. We have the companies we have currently serving in each area largely because of their own efforts to squash out competition by any means at their disposal. As an example from a parallel but similar service, most markets in the country only have one Cable TV provider, despite a lot of deregulation over the years, which has only served to **increase** consumer prices for these services. Cable TV providers have not improved the quality of their services since initially upgrading to HDTV many years ago, despite considerably higher consumer prices for the service, even with only scant regulation. This is further proof that the public will not benefit in any way from the elimination of the Title II protections, also known as "net neutrality"!

It is also not unreasonable to note that the current Chairman of the FCC, Ajit V. Pai was formerly the Associate General Counsel of Verizon Communications. As I understand it, he was in the forefront in the court battles just a few years ago, hoping to enrich Verizon. If proceeding 17-108 were to be adopted, his former employer, Verizon Communications, would be one of the biggest beneficiaries; at the expense of the very public that Mr. Pai is currently supposed to be defending in his present role at the FCC. I personally believe that Mr. Pai should recuse himself from this matter, based on his financial connections to a company that stands to benefit from this change. As a former Associate General Counsel of Verizon, Mr. Pai likely owns a significant portfolio of stock in Verizon, which would certainly increase in value if proceeding 17-108 were approved.

I strongly urge the rest of the FCC Commissioners to heed the credo of the FCC, and **act in the public interest**, by continuing to protect a free and open internet by leaving the "Title II" classification for internet service providers in place as is. Nothing has changed during the last two years that warrants reversing course on this important matter.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,



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